

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE A-3

NEW YORK TIMES
11 DECEMBER 1982

U.S. Plans War Headquarters in Britain

By RICHARD HALLORAN

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Dec. 10 — The Reagan Administration plans to build a \$13 million support headquarters in Britain, into which 1,000 staff officers of the United States European Command would move if war began in Europe, senior Administration officials said today.

The officials said the support center in High Wycombe, west of London, scheduled to be completed by 1986, would accommodate intelligence, operations, personnel, and logistics officers from the peacetime headquarters in Stuttgart, West Germany, and from the United States.

The main mission of the wartime support headquarters would be to assist American commanders on the Continent but not to run the war. The support center would be particularly charged with moving troop reinforcements and supplies from the United States to the battle front.

The commanders of United States and allied forces would remain in Europe, the officials said, and would work from a new command post being built in Mons, Belgium, south of Brussels. Combat commanders would lead their forces in the field.

Need for Wartime Headquarters

The officials said the wartime headquarters was needed because Stuttgart is too exposed and lacks protected centers for an extensive war room. The European Command headquarters in Stuttgart, they said, was intended only for peacetime.

They asserted that, contrary to press reports from Europe, the plan for moving staff officers into the wartime headquarters in Britain signified no loss of confidence in American and European forces. One senior officer called such allegations "hogwash."

A British newspaper, The Guardian, carried a report this morning headlined, "U.S. to Pull Back War Centre to Britain." The article contended the United States believed that NATO forces would not be able to hold West Germany against a Soviet invasion.

The dispatch set off a flurry of denials in West Germany, Britain and the United States, with Secretary of State George P. Shultz telling correspondents in Brussels that "there is no truth" to the report that the headquarters would be moved within four years.

'An Alternate Location'

In Stuttgart, a spokesman for United States forces in Europe said: "In the event of hostilities, this headquarters as well as other military headquarters would move to an alternate location. Planning to identify an alternate location has been under way for some time."

Officials in Washington said there had been full consultations with the British and West German Governments, although spokesmen in London and Bonn professed ignorance of the plans.

General Bernard W. Rogers, an American Army officer, commands both United States and NATO forces in Europe. The United States has 301,000 troops in Europe, including 217,000 in the Army, 74,000 in the Air Force, 9,000 in the Navy and about 1,000 marines.

The establishment of the wartime headquarters was ordered in Defense Guidance, the classified five-year plan of strategic direction from Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger to the armed forces. It instructed the Joint Chiefs of Staff "to establish a European Command war headquarters in the United Kingdom by 1986 as part of a survivable European command and control system."

Defense Guidance said that "the command and control systems must support continuity of Government and survive enemy attack, including biological warfare and chemical warfare agents, nuclear effects, and acts of sabotage."